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Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development

Statement submitted by non-governmental organizations participating in the Economic and Social Council Non-Governmental Organization Forum (Part II)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2006/100.

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Statement

The ECOSOC NGO Forum this year was held in two parts; while NGO Forum Part I was held on 6 April 2006, NGO Forum Part II incorporating infopoverty as a theme titled, "VI Infopoverty World Conference" was held on 20-21 April 2006. Active participation to the NGO Forum was facilitated by the two pilot countries of the United Nations Public Private Alliance for Rural Development, Madagascar and the Dominican Republic. The NGO Forum brought forth participation, recommendations and contributions through videoconferencing and teleconference links from parallel sessions being held in 8 cities by ITA, including Moscow, Sambaina (Madagascar), Milan (Italy), Arusha (United Republic of Tanzania), Window Rock (Navajo Nation), Sao Paolo (Brazil) and Lima.

The NGO Forum in New York was attended by 173 representatives of over 135 organizations. The multi-stakeholder participation brought contributions of civil society and major stakeholders to the 2006 High Level Segment of ECOSOC. The outcome of this meeting will be presented at the HLS of ECOSOC (3-5 July 2006) at Geneva in the form of a coalition statement.

The NGO Forum received valuable contributions from Congresswoman, Ms. Loretta Sanchez, Senator, Mr. John Kerry, Mr. Joe Shirley Jr., President, Navajo Nation, H.E. Ambassador Zina Andrianarivelo-Razafy, Permanent Mission of Madagascar to the United Nations, H.E. Ambassador Francis Lorenzo, Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, Mr. Gaddi H. Vasque, Director Peace Corps Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury Under-Secretary General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr. Sarbuland Khan, Director, ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Ms. Hanifa Mezoui, Chief, NGO Section/ DESA, Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro, CEO, Formit Servizi, Mr. Abdul W. Khan, Assistant Director General, UNESCO, Ms. Maria Grazia Cavenaghi Smith, Director, European Parliament Office in Milan.

While issues, themes and best practices that can address the digital divide and concerns of Infopoverty remained the focus, the discussions also brought in strong recommendations towards generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development including the integration of ICTs as a tool for development and bridging the digital divide by strengthening and identifying Public-Private Partnerships.

Many new Partnerships and Best Practices were showcased at the NGO Forum, foremost being the partnership initiative with United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development, which in itself was established to identify, highlight, and promote replication of successful business policies and practices that are both profitable and promote social and economic advancement of poor people in rural areas. The prominent projects that were showcased included:

"One Dollar for Development", which was based on no-cost software technology transfer from developed to developing countries at the symbolic price of one dollar. The underlying rationale for this initiative is that, sustainable MDG-based strategies of developing countries require significant public investments to spur local scientific innovation and technological development. There are many Countries, which have successfully developed and deployed e-Government applications in many key areas such as Justice, Security, Healthcare, Welfare, Transport and Education. Without

having to reinvest and at a fraction of the initial development costs, most of these applications could be easily duplicated, re-deployed and put in use in developing countries to support local innovation and technological development with far reaching impacts on the national economy in general and in the field of governance in particular. The ODFD initiative aims at making available at no cost e-Government applications owned by developed countries to developing countries by encouraging the North-South and South-South cooperation as an effective contribution to development and as a means to share and transfer good practices and technologies.

ICT Village-The project has the objective of Creation of a replicable and affordable model to grant to disadvantaged community in the Dominican Republic access to the digital revolution and reap its opportunities for a sustainable development, thanks to the convergence of UN system agencies and programmes, as well as leading private companies and the civil society. To experiment on the field the most advanced technologies, applications and services that are both fit to the needs of the communities and easy to use by all, so that positive effects can be rapidly achieved: providing solutions to emergencies (in fields such as health, education, food & water) and spurring endogenous development (creating jobs, building capacity, promoting the communitarian participation of all).

In order to realize those goals, the project is intended to provide connectivity to a village in Madagascar to deliver to its population the following advanced services: Telemedicine, E-learning, E-government, E-commerce. The project will be implemented in a village in the Dominican Republic chosen in agreement with the Government of the Dominican Republic and relevant institutions involved in the UN Alliance.

Navajo Nation-The Navajo Nation is now using ICT of its own to deliver distance learning, economic opportunity, telemedicine, e-government and public safety to remote communities throughout its 27,000-square mile land base. ITU has recognized the work done by the Navajo Nation to bring information, communications and technology to its citizens as one of the most advanced systems in the emerging nations and one that can be reproduced by other indigenous nations. Because of this, the Navajo Nation is expected to take a leadership role to represent indigenous issues to the world beginning with this summit. Today, all 110 Navajo chapters now have free wireless Internet connections and computers where any Navajo can have an e-mail address and get online for free. In addition, every chapter and most Navajo Nation divisions, departments and programs have their own websites. "The most important thing is that our people are communicating with their government, and their government is communicating with them," President Shirley said. "As President, I need to hear from my people, whether they are in a community center or living far away from Navajo land, whether working, in school, or serving in the armed forces in a foreign country."

Specific recommendations from Milan focused on the synergy that should be created with the projects being showcased, mentioning specifically about The "OCCAM ICT Villages" and "the FORMIT One Dollar For Development" are projects that can run together because absolutely complementary and compliant. The first one is about ICT infrastructure and the second one is about ICT software applications and these two projects if developed together can become a perfect ICT package ready to be used by developing countries.

Focusing on the pilot countries of the UN Public Private Alliance that were the focus of the forum, it was noted that many developing countries like Madagascar and

Dominican Republic are already well-involved in process of achieving the MDGs and have launched their own ICT strategy. These have been done by identifying and establishing new form of cooperation with multi-stakeholders, linking governments, Academia, the private sector, NGOs and international organizations, and supported by a clear and farsighted governmental strategy for development. Because of that, these Countries are ready right now to implement and take advantage of this new ICT package because they have already an ICT Village and they have already started to talk about "One dollar for development".

The role of Donors was also emphasized. It was highlighted that donors could support developing countries and launch this new ICT package which needs software applications from donors, coming from Public and Private sector. Public donors were defined giving the example of the Government and institutions, and to think how much they had already invested and developed in e-governance software applications that can easily donate to support developing countries. Elaborated in the scope were other donors for e.g. France, Germany, Netherlands, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Spain, and also the European Parliament, European organizations and the other not European G-8 Countries. All of them have development best practices in ICT and all of them can donate at no cost even only one-application already in use in key areas such as healthcare, justice, welfare, Transportation, Education. In the end of the forum a draft declaration was adopted. Additionally, the recommendations called upon all the stakeholders to go beyond access by engaging multi-stakeholders, engaging local participants as partners in the process. The process/initiatives should have cultural relevance; they must be very creative, in reaching out to larger, more diverse populations. Strengthening human capacity in the areas of e-governance and public administration was also emphasized in various recommendations.

As regards job creation and employment generation the ICT tools should be used to stimulate inputs from agriculture and non-traditional sectors. The draft declaration also called upon governments and intergovernmental organizations to use both traditional and ICT methods to enable access to national and international markets, in order to stimulate the creation of decent work through the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises.